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THE NEW HAVEN (CONN.) POTTERS, 1639.

By

JAMES SHEPARD.

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THE NEW HAVEN (CONN.) POTTERS, 1639.

1. HANNAH [Potter] BEECHER was the mother of the New Haven Potters, who appeared early in New Haven as a widow with sons: i. John, ii. William and iii. Isaac Beecher, the ancestor of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. Her first husband, Potter, died in England, where she married a Mr. Beecher.

It is generally supposed that her husband was John Beecher, one of the seven whom Eaton sent to New Haven in advance of the colony and who died before the colony arrived. She has been considered to be the mother of Isaac Beecher, for she calls him her son in her will and gave him one-third of her property; but recent investigations, it is claimed, show conclusively that Isaac was only a step-son, the son of her second husband by a former wife.

There was in New Haven, says G. F. Tuttle, as early as 1641, a widow Hannah Potter, known as widow Potter the midwife. In 1643 she had two persons in the family, thirty pounds estate and twenty and one quarter acres of land. She is called "sister Potter the midwife," in seating the meeting house in 1646. She is supposed to have been akin to the other Potters, but there is no record to show it. She has often been confounded with the widow Hannah Beecher, but the records clearly show that they were two different persons.

The will of Hannah Beecher was proved April 5, 1659, and is recorded in first part, vol. i., p. 80, of New Haven Probate Records, as follows:

"I Hannah Beecher of New Haven, expecting my great change do make this my last will and testament, I bequeath my soul unto the hands of my Lord Jesus Christ by whose meritt I hope to be saved and my body to be burried at the discretion of my son William Potter my Executor. And for my worldly goods I give unto John Potter my Grand child twenty shillings and to Hannah Blackly, my Grand child, wife to Samuel Blackly, twenty shillings, And to Samuel Potter my Grand child twenty shillings to be paid to them within three months after my decease. And for the rest of my estate I give one third part to my son Isaac Beecher and two thirds to my eldest son William Potter, making him my Executor, desiring him to be as a father to his younger brother and his children. And in dividing my goods my will is that my son William should have my feather bed with that belongeth to it, unto his part and that the rest be divided at the discretion of my Overseers with the assistance of Sister Wakeman and sister Rutherford and I desire my loving friends Mr. Mathew Gilbert and John Wakeman to be overseers of this my last will whereunto I have set my hand this 13th day of June, Anno 1657.

Witnesses. the mark of
Mathew Gilbert, HANNAH BECHER.
John Wakeman,
Sarah Rutherford."

Her children were: John Potter, died 1643. William Potter, born about 1608, died 1662.

2. JOHN[2] POTTER (*Hannah*[1] *Beecher*,) was a freeman in New Haven in 1639, not admitted when the planters' covenant was first signed but expressed his consent to it and soon after subscribed to the agreement made in general town meeting, 1639, "thatt church members onely shall be free burgesses and they onely shall chuse among themselves magistrates and officers."

In 1643 he had four persons in the family, estate valued at twenty-five pounds, and had twenty-eight and three-quarters acres of land. Tuttle says that he died in 1643. The name of John Potter's widow was Elizabeth. In June, 1646, one Mrs. Brewster was before the court for slandering many persons one of whom was William Preston. She also slandered widow Potter (of John), and Edward Parker. For some reason, not stated, the elders, &c., did not approve of Edward Parker and requested Mrs. Potter not to receive his attentions. The result was that Mrs. Potter was excommunicated and Mrs. Brewster said that "Mrs. Potter would not join the church because she would not give up Edward Parker." She married Edward Parker about this time, for in July, 1646, "Edward Parker and his wife presented their desires to the Court to invest John Potter's two sons in the right of their father's land and house and declared themselves willing to bestow a heifer of a year old on Hannah and deliver it presently for her use and so to be improved as stock for her * * * per a particular writing in the hand of the secrettarie, made and signed by both of them before the governor, deputy governor and magistrates."

In the same year "It was ordered with the consent of Edward Parker and his wife, that Jn°. Potter should be put an apprentice for 8 years from the first of Aug. last unto Roger Allen for to learne his trade."

In November, 1649, Edward Parker appeared in Court and "desired that he might be freed from his engagement concerning the house and lott which was John Potter's and is securitie for the children's portions, for he is willing to leave it to the court to dispose of otherwise."

In 1650 William Potter was called before the court to account for a heifer he had of his kinswoman Hannah Potter. He said he would give twenty shillings a year for her until his kinswoman was of age to receive her.

After Edward Parker's death in 1662, his widow, Elizabeth, married Robert Rose of Branford, who died in 1665. Rose and his first wife were ancestors of the writer, and by this marriage he can say that he descended from both wives of Robert Rose.

Widow Rose was probably a business woman, for her son John Potter in his will, 1706, gives to his son Samuel "ye still that was my mother's." He also gives to the same son the bedstead and little chair "that was his grandmother's," (widow Hannah Beecher's). Widow Elizabeth Rose made her will July 23, 1677, and died before signing it. The children agreed to abide by the will and later the court admitted the will to probate. Nothing is known against widow Elizabeth Rose, alias Parker, alias Potter, except her romantic attachment for Edward Parker, and nothing is known against Parker except that the elders for some unknown reason did not approve of him. The fact that her heirs agreed to stand by a void will is conclusive proof that she was a woman of merit and had the respect of her children, who were willing, even in property affairs, to abide by her wishes. She

died July 28, 1677. Her will, recorded in vol. i., part first, p. 176, New Haven Probate Records, is as follows:

"The last will of Elizabeth Rose widdow N. Haven deceased.

Know all whom it may concern that I Elizabeth Rose of New Haven widdow being weak in body yet of competent sound understanding and memory doe make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following; committing my soule into ye hands of Jesus Christ my redemer and my body to a descent buriall according to ye discretion of my executors hereafter to be named; I dispose of my outward estate as followeth. Imps. I doe give and bequeath unto my two sons John Potter and Samll. Potter twenty shillings a piece. Item. To my son John Parker my house he lives in with all my land and meadow and all the rights & priveledges thereunto belonging. Item to my daughter Brooks twenty shillings. Item. to my daughter Hall my small bible, and to my daughter cooke my best sute of apparrell. Item. to all my grandchildren twelve pence a piece. Item. After all my debts & legacyes be paid and other necessary expenses discharged my will is that ye remainder of my estate be equally divided between my three daughters Mary, Hope, & Lydia. And I doe desire and appoint my two sons John Potter and John Parker joint Executors of this my last will and testament and I doe allow them to have out of my estate ten shillings a piece for their care and paynes therein. And I doe hereby revoke all former wills and declare and publish this to bee my last will and testament. In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seal this three and twentyeth day of July one thousand six hundred and seventy seven, 1677, signed and sealed in ye presence of—— but dyed before signing and sealing."

The inventory of her estate amounted to £49. 11s. 09d.

The children of John and Elizabeth Potter were:

i. John, b. about 1636. His will, dated 1706, calls him about seventy, m. 1st, Hannah Cooper, who d. June 15, 1675; m. 2d, Mary Russell, Dec. 29, 1679. He d. Dec. 24, 1706.

ii. Hannah, m. 1st. Samuel Blakesley, Dec. 3, 1650; she m. 2d, Henry Brooks, Dec. 21, 1676. Widow Hannah Brooks d. Nov. 7, 1723. Bronson in his history of Waterbury says, that Samuel Blakesley's wife Hannah was dau. of William Potter, but the will of Elizabeth Rose (who was formerly John Potter's wife), made July 23, 1677, about six months after widow Hannah Blakesley m. Henry Brooks, names her "daughter Brooks," which conclusively proves that she was the dau. of John and Elizabeth Potter.

iii. Samuel, m. Annah, dau. of William Russell, Nov. 21, 1670.

Elizabeth Potter's Parker children were:

iv. Mary Parker, bapt. Aug. 27, 1648; m. John Hall of Wallingford, Conn., Dec. 6, 1666. She died Sept. 22, 1725.

v. John Parker, bapt. Oct. 8, 1648; m. Hannah Bassett, Nov. 8, 1670.

vi. Hope Parker, b. April 26, bapt. May 26, 1650; m. Samuel Cook of Wallingford, Conn., May 2, 1667.

vii. Lydia Parker, b. April 14, 1652; m. John Thomas, Jan. 12, 1671.

3. William[2] Potter (*Hannah*[1] *Beecher*), Savage says of Watertown, Mass., probably came in the Abigail from London, in 1635, aged 27, with wife Frances, aged 26, and child Joseph, aged twenty weeks. He removed

to New Haven and with his brother John signed the agreement in general town meeting, 1639. "In 1643 brother Potter was fined one shilling for coming late last trayning day," and again was fined for defective arms. He took the oath of allegiance with others in 1644.

In 1645 Brother Potter (William) made an offer, "to carry every man's grist from their howes to the mill & bring it back againe to their howes for 2d pr. bushell."

His name appears in the seating of the meeting house in 1646, and in 1647 he was one of the Fence viewers for the farms this side of East River.

On Oct. 5, 1647, it is recorded, that Mr. Evance had sold to Wm. Potter 27 and a half acres of meadow as it cometh to him in the towne books, and lyeth in the east meadows between Mr. Crayne and Bro. Punderson and 32 acres of upland. He was one of the appraisers on the estate of Richard Mansfield in 1656. His home lott was on the west side of the Quinipiac River, near the present Cedar Hill railroad station.

His will was made May 19, 1662, and is as follows:

"William Potter disposes of his estate of outward things as followeth. After all Debts discharged my will is that my wife should have her living out of the farms till my Sonne Nathanll come to ye age of 21 years, then ye sd. Nathaniell is to possess ye sd. farms and all yt is upon it, if my wife continue a widdow my will is yt my Sonne Nathanll allow her a comfortable Living out of the same and if shee see cause to Dwell elsewhere my will is yt my sonne Nathaniell allow her 12th a yeare.

it; my will is yt my sonne Joseph should have 30th. payd him within yt term of six years after ye date hereof.

it: my will is yt my daughter Hope and my daughter Rebeckah shall have 20th. apiece payd ym when their mother sees good to pay it them. My will is that those Legasyes be-payd out of the farms before it come into my sonnes Nathanll's hands.

19. 3. 62.

Witnesses. William Peck. Richard Miles."

Inventory filed Aug. 1. 1662. Amt. £190. 04. 00.

Children:

i. Joseph, b. in England, in 1635; m. Phebe ———.

ii. Mary, bapt. in New Haven, Aug. 22, 1641; m. about 1657, Joseph Mansfield.

iii. Sarah, bapt. Aug. 22, 1641, but was not a twin with Mary. She m. 1st. Lieut. Robert Foote of Branford, Conn.: 2d, Aaron Blakesley.

iv. Hope, bapt. Oct. 3. 1641; m. Feb. 5, 1663, Daniel Robinson. Removed to New Jersey.

v. Rebecca, bapt. 1643: m. Nov. 27, 1667, Thomas Adams. Removed to Crosswicks, N. J.

vi. Nathaniel, bapt. Dec. 12, 1644; m. April 1, 1675, Elizabeth Hawes.

Of these children, Mary and Sarah are not named in their father's will, but Sarah was living Aug. 23, 1706, when "Sarah Blakesley, alias Foote, alias Potter, daughter of William Potter," acknowledges on p. 130, vol. v., New Haven Land Records, the receipt of her full share in her father's estate.

The following is the Potter record from vol. i., in the Registrar's Office, New Haven, Conn.:

Potter Births.

Joseph	son	of	Joseph	born	8 Oct.	1661.
Rebeckah	dau.	"	"	"	26 May	1663.
———*	son	"	"	"	Mar.	1667–8.
John*	"	"	John	"	13 June	1663.
Hannah	dau.	"	"	"	26 June	1665.
John	son	"	"	"	4 Aug.	1667.
Samuel*	"	"	"	"	23 July	1669.
Samuel*	"	"	"	"	25 Dec.	1670.
———*	"	"	"	"	1 Feb.	1671.
Mary	dau.	"	"	"	16 Mar.	1672–3.
Samuel	son	"	"	"	3 June	1675.
Abigal	dau.	"	"	"	23 Sept.	1680.
Nathaniel	son	"	Nathaniel	"	20 Feb.	1675.
Elizabeth	dau.	"	"	"	30 Aug.	1677.
Samuel	son	"	"	"	3 Oct.	1679.
Sarah	dau.	"	"	"	31 Oct.	1681.
Stephen	son	"	"	"	11 July	1684.
Mary	dau.	"	"	"	8 Oct.	1686.
Daniel	son	"	"	"	1 Jan.	1688–9.
Deborah	dau.	"	"	"	1 Mar.	1694–5.
Sarah	"	"	"	"	1 Mar.	1698–9.
Abigal	"	"	"	"	1 Sept.	1701.
James	son	"	"	"	6 Sept.	1707.
Lidiah	dau.	"	"	"	15 July	1709.
John	son	"	John Jun.	"	14 July	1695.
Elizabeth	dau.	"	" "	"	24 Sept.	1697.
Gideon	son	of	John Jun.	born	3 June	1700.
Daniel	"	"	John	"	15 Jan.	1701.
Joseph	"	"	Joseph	"	15 Mar.	1702.
Elizabeth	dau.	"	"	"	2 Sept.	1704.
John	son	"	"	"	Aug.	1706.
Mary	dau.	"	"	"	19 May	1710.
Enos	son	"	John Jun.	"	12 Dec.	1706.
Samuel	"	"	Samuel	"	18 Sept.	1711.
Moses	"	"	"	"	10 Nov.	1713.
Aron	"	"	"	"	1 Mar.	1715–6.
David	"	"	"	"	26 Nov.	1717.
Abigal	dau.	"	"	"	28 Aug.	1719.
Hannah	"	"	"	"	7 Nov.	1721.
Joel	son	"	"	"	31 Jan.	1723–4.
Thomas	"	"	Daniel	"	15 Sept.	1714.
Daniel	"	"	"	"	9 June	1718.
Mehitabel	dau.	"	"	"	9 Nov.	1720.
Nathan	son	"	"	"	28 July	1729.
Phinehas	"	"	"	"	7 Jan.	1732–3.
Elam	"	"	Daniel Jun.	"	1 Jan.	1741–2.
Meche	"	"	Daniel Sen.	"	11 June	1742.
Hosea	"	"	Daniel of East Haven	"	29 Mar.	1735.
Lois	dau.	"	Daniel	"	15 Dec.	1737.

John	son of John	born	1 Apr. 1721.
Abigal	dau. " "	"	26 Jan. 1723.
Joel	son " "	"	11 Apr. 1727.
John	" " John Jun.	"	16 Nov. 1731.
Thomas	" " John	"	15 June 1733.
Esther	dau. " "	"	8 Apr. 1735.
Mary	" " "	"	2 Mar. 1736–7.
Phebe	" " "	"	8 Oct. 1739.
Mary	" " "	"	23 Sept. 1741.
Phebe	" " "	"	8 Aug. 1743.
Thankful	" " "	"	19 June 1745.
Sibil	" " "	"	4 Nov. 1747.
John	son " "	"	29 Sept. 1749.
Job	" " "	"	26 Nov. 1751.
Mercy	dau. " Stephen	"	9 Sept. 1711.
Stephen	son " "	"	18 Sept. 1714.
Amos	" " "	"	29 Dec. 1715.
Hannah	dau. " "	"	4 Apr. 1718.
Joseph	son " Joseph Jun.	"	6 Aug. 1739.
Timothy	" " " "	"	12 Feb. 1731–2.
Titus	" " " "	"	1 Apr. 1734.
Philemon	" " " "	"	31 Mar. 1737.
Rhoda	dau. " James	"	22 Feb. 1730–1.
Jonah	son " "	"	5 Feb. 1733–4.
Sarah	dau. " "	"	19 Nov. 1736.
Moses	son " Aaron	"	8 Jan. 1740–1
Dorcas	dau. " "	"	4 Apr. 1743.
Aaron	son " "	"	1 July 1745.
Lemuel	" " "	"	8 July 1747.
Abigal	dau. " " changed to Esther	"	13 May 1749.
Dorotha	dau. of Aaron	born	29 Nov. 1750.
Eunice	" " James & Sarah	"	13 Nov. 1742.
Abel	son " David	"	15 June 1749.
David	" " "	"	10 June 1751.
William	" " Enos & Abigal	"	21 Nov. 1750.
Ezra	" " " " "	"	10 May 1752.

Potter Marriages.

Hannah	& Samuel Blakesley	m.	3 Dec. 1650
Hope	& Daniel Robinson	m.	2 Feb. 1665.
Rebeckah	& Thomas Adams	m.	27 Nov. 1667
Wid. Phebe	& John Rose Jun.	m.	Aug. 1670.
Samuel	& Annah Russell	m.	21 Nov. 1670.
Nathaniel	& Elizabeth Hawes	m.	1 Apr. 1675.
John	& Mary Russell	m.	20 Dec. 1679.
John Jun.	& Elizabeth Holt	m.	23 Feb. 1681–2.
Nathaniel	& Lidiah Thomas	m.	15 Dec. 1706.
Samuel	& Abigal Hill	m.	10 Jan. 1700–1.
Daniel	& Mary Ray	m.	30 Mar. 1714
Elizabeth	& Timothy Clark	m.	31 Jan. 1723–4.
Elizabeth	& John Blakesley	m.	6 Aug. 1724.
Sarah	& John Harrison	m.	14 Apr. 1725.

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